

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 001698

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL SUMMIT

[11.](#) (U) Summary: Heads of state from member countries in the Central American Integration System (SICA) met in Guatemala City at the organization's 24th Presidential Summit on June [129.](#) Summit representatives discussed reforms to the Central American Parliament (Parlacen), migratory issues, commerce, and security. Parlacen heads of state agreed to reconvene in August in El Salvador to vote on the Parlacen reforms. The governments of Costa Rica and Belize both stated that if Parlacen approves the reforms, they will join the organization. The Ministers of Government will also reconvene in late July in Nicaragua to further discuss security issues and to complete an agreement facilitating the coordination of police forces in the capture and extradition of criminals. End Summary.

[12.](#) (U) The attendees of the summit included the Presidents of Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic, the First Vice President of Panama, and the Vice Prime Minister of Belize. Antonio Saca, President of El Salvador assumed the presidency pro tempore of SICA.

Parlacen Reforms

[13.](#) (U) The Parlacen reforms did not pass during this summit due to lack of consensus, but representatives will reconvene in August for a vote. The reforms include the reduction of Parlacens budget and number of parliamentarians, the establishment of clear functions and objectives, and the elimination of automatic seats and criminal immunity for former presidents. Vice Prime Minister of Belize John Briceno and President Abel Pacheco of Costa Rica indicated that their countries would become members of Parlacen if these reforms were realized.

Security Issues

[14.](#) (U) The SICA security commission (comprised of the Ministers of Government and their counterparts) focused on arms trafficking, extradition, TIP, border security, combating gangs, and crimes against women. The Ministers of Government will meet in late July to discuss these issues, develop a coordinated program of prevention and societal reinsertion of gang members, and complete an agreement facilitating the coordination of police forces in the capture and extradition of criminals.

Migratory Issues

[15.](#) (U) The discussion on migratory issues revolved around establishing a common customs procedure for all of Central America, facilitating easier regional travel for Central Americans, and negotiating an alternative to Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in the US for countries whose citizens do not enjoy this benefit. In terms of standardizing customs procedures, the heads of state instructed their Ministers of Economy and Foreign Commerce to present a plan outlining the necessary steps within 30 days, with a plan to complete the standardization by December 31, 2004. The heads of state also agreed to intensify regional coordination so that they could improve the living conditions for US migrants, reduce the costs of transfer for remittances, and lobby the USG for an alternative to TPS for countries that do not enjoy those benefits.

[16.](#) (U) Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, also agreed to continue their efforts to facilitate regional migration of citizens. During the summit they renewed their support of the Plan for Central American Migratory Integration (CA-4), which allows for easier ground and air movement by citizens of the CA-4 countries without passports. President Oscar Berger told the press that the CA-4 migration procedures will now extend to airports where, "there will be a window saying: 'Welcome, Central Americans,' and everything will be much easier." He also added that these changes will be implemented before August 1 of next year.

WHARTON